



4 FOOD PACKAGE/DRAFT ISSUANCE
4.2 WIC Food List

Effective: 3/1/98
Revised: 4/1/03

POLICY: All WIC staff shall be familiar with the criteria the State WIC Office uses for the development of the WIC Food List. Projects are responsible for implementation of revised Food Lists, including training vendors (except in Milwaukee County) and informing participants. While Projects may not approve food items, sending labels of new products to the State WIC Office for evaluation for the next Food List is recommended. Projects are responsible for informing participants if foods are removed during the Food List mid-cycle.

BACKGROUND: The State WIC Office revises the WIC Food List, in conjunction with the vendor authorization process, every two years, with an effective date of November 1st of even-numbered years. The List is developed with input from appropriate stakeholders (e.g., participants, Project staff, vendor representatives, State staff) using established criteria, with subsequent approval by USDA. To help assure consistency in philosophy from year to year, the goal is: "To establish criteria to promote healthy, lifelong eating habits, the criteria are to be balanced among the following: reasonable cost, acceptance, understandability, and availability." Materials and guidance are provided to vendors and projects prior to implementation of a new list. Projects may not approve foods that are not on the List, even if the food meets Federal WIC Regulations. Infant formulas and medical foods (referred to as liquid nutrition products on participant materials) are not included in this process.

PROCEDURE:

A. FOOD LIST IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

WIC staff should have a basic understanding of the process the State WIC Program uses for approving WIC foods and implementing new Lists. The State WIC Office communicates changes, etc. through the WIC Advisory Committee, monthly Updates, and, if needed, through additional mailings or communications.

1. The key dates in the Food List/Vendor Reauthorization process are listed below. These occur in even-numbered years.
 - a) January through July: The State WIC Program collects nutrient, price, availability, and participant preference information on WIC eligible foods (i.e., those that meet the Federal WIC Regulations); convenes a workgroup to make recommendations for the Food List; develops the List; obtains USDA approval; develops and/or revises materials for vendors and participants; and develops and implements the process for converting from the old Food List.
 - b) August through October:



- (1) The State WIC Office mails quantities of new/revised materials (WIC Approved Foods guides; "WIC, You, and the Grocery Store, Too" videotapes or posters identifying changes; etc.) to Projects. Revised Food List materials are also sent to vendors.
 - (2) The State WIC Office provides trainings for Project vendors contacts and nutritionists, as needed.
 - (3) Projects conduct vendor trainings (except for Milwaukee county vendors who are trained by the State Vendor Unit).
 - (4) The State WIC Office sends new Operations and System Manual pages and revised forms (e.g., policies, Food Package Tailoring/Selection Chart) to Projects.
- c) November - January: Projects distribute and train participants on the new Food List.

B. FOOD LIST MATERIALS FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. WIC Approved Foods List (PPH 4728) (see Attachment): This is a written list of the approved foods (except for the formulas and medical foods). The List is included in the WIC Vendor Manual and is a simple List for FAXing upon request. The Spanish version (PPH 4728S) may be given in conjunction with the WIC Approved Foods guide as needed.
2. WIC Approved Foods (PPH 4578) (see Attachment): This is a pictorial guide, in color, that illustrates and lists all of the approved foods except for formulas and medical foods (referred to as liquid nutrition products on the guide). This guide is to be given to all participants. If a Spanish translation is needed, give the translated WIC Food List (PPH 4728S) in addition to the Guide.
3. "WIC, You, and the Grocery Store, Too" videotape: This videotape is to be used for training participants. It is produced in English, Spanish, and Hmong.

C. OTHER MATERIALS

1. Store Brand Cereal Information (see Attachment): Projects may use this information to develop educational material that identifies the specific approved store brand cereals available in the Project service area.

D. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES



1. Review revised/new policies and materials, including the Food List Criteria (see Attachment).
2. Train participants on foods to be removed from the Food List beginning in September (or earlier). Train participants on the revised Food List beginning November 1st. Solicit participants' feedback on their understanding of the new List at least until January.
 - a) Provide a face-to-face contact, whether in a group, interactive display, or individual setting.
 - b) Provide written materials, e.g., newsletters or flyers, when possible and appropriate.
 - c) Utilize displays and bulletin boards for ongoing reinforcement of changes, as possible.
 - d) At draft issuance, inquire about shopping experiences and follow-up with questions, as needed.
3. Incorporate training methods and materials that are appropriate for the individual comprehension levels of participants, including language.

E. CHANGES TO THE LIST MID-CYCLE

Foods are not added to the list mid-cycle, even if they meet the approval criteria. Products are removed from the list mid-cycle if a reformulation makes them ineligible, if the name changes, or if the label changes so significantly that it is confusing for participants' selection.

1. When the State WIC Office provides information or clarification on foods, generally through a monthly Update, inform participants (e.g., via a newsletter, posters, etc.).
2. If a store carries a new product (or one where it is unclear whether or not it is approved), it is recommended to send a label to the State WIC Office for clarification or for consideration during the next selection cycle.
3. Do not approve/issue a food or brand of a food for purchase by participants that has not been authorized by the State WIC Office.

F. FORMULAS AND MEDICAL FOODS

Refer to Policy 4.10 Food Packages: General (Food Package Tailoring/Selection Chart) for the list of allowed formulas and medical foods. Specific brands are also



Food Package/Draft Issuance

specified on the drafts. Projects may not approve or issue products that are not on this chart.

ATTACHMENTS:

Wisconsin WIC Approved Foods List (PPH 4728)

WIC Approved Foods (PPH 4578) (pictorial guide)

WIC Food Authorization Criteria